

**Subject : Junior Cycle History**  
**Teacher : Niall Lenehan**

**LESSON 10**  
**The American Revolution**

## Learning intentions

- Understand The causes, the course and the consequences of the American Revolution.

### 3.3 examine the causes, course and consequences of one revolution in pre-twentieth century Europe and/or the wider world.

#### Key words – define these

Colonist

Colonies

Assembly

Revolution

Militiamen

Taxation

Independence

## The American Revolution

The American revolution was a conflict fought between the **thirteen American colonies** and their **British rulers**.

### What were the thirteen colonies?

Between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Britain set up colonies on Americas east coast.

Settlers from Britain and Europe settled in these colonies and the population reached over two million by 1750.



The 13 colonies

## The Causes of the American Revolution

1. **The Stamp Act** of 1765 was a tax on all printed and written documents such as letters, newspapers, wills and bills. This caused severe economic hardship for American colonists.
2. After they had repealed (taken away) the Stamp Act, the British instead imposed the **Townshend Acts** in 1767. This was a tax placed on goods that America imported, such as tea, glass, paint and lead.
3. **Boston Massacre** – In March 1770, British soldiers fired on a crowd of angry protesters in Boston. 5 people were killed. This created more anger and resentment among Americans. Americans used it as a source of propaganda to gain support for a revolution.

4. **The Boston Tea Party** – In 1773 they passed the Tea Act, which exempted the (British) East India Company from paying the tea tax. American political activist group, 'The Sons of liberty' boarded a ship and dumped 342 crates of tea belonging to the East India Tea Company into Boston harbor.



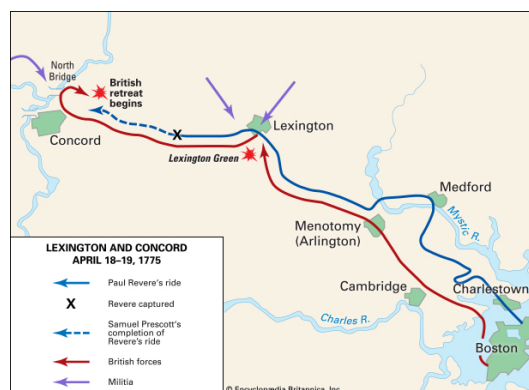
5. **The intolerable acts** - In response to the Boston Tea Party, the British closed the port of Boston until compensation was paid for the tea. The city was put under military rule and the colony's assembly was suspended. These were called the intolerable acts.
6. **The Continental Congress** – This was a meeting of representatives from the thirteen colonies to decide how to resist British rule. Some wanted to go to war while others wanted to simply boycott British goods.

## Recap exercise 10.1

Q1. Name and explain three causes of the American Revolution.

## The Course of the American Revolution

- **The Battles of Lexington and Concord** - In April 1775, British soldiers led by general Gage he sent 800 troops to seize weapons at **Concord**, near Boston.
- At **Lexington**, on the way to Concord, a small force of American militiamen engaged the British troops. Ten Americans were killed and eight captured. When the British reached Concord, the weapons were gone.
- On their way back to Boston there was a larger battle and 273 British soldiers died.



The Battles of Lexington and Concord

- **The Second Continental Congress** – The Continental Congress met a second time in May 1775 and decided that war was the only way to get independence from Britain.
- **George Washington** was chosen to raise an army.
- A pamphlet written by **Thomas Paine** called **Common Sense** was read widely throughout the colonies. In this,

he argued for independence from Britain and the creation of a democratic Republic.

- **The Declaration of Independence** – In August 1776, the Continental Congress signed the Declaration of Independence.
- This established a revolutionary government and announced the USA as an independent country.

**Over the next number of years, both British and American continental forces would engage in a number of battles:**

1. **The Battle of Bunker Hill (June 1775)**
2. **The Battles of New York (August 1776)**
3. **The battles of Princeton and Trenton (December 1776 – January 1777).**
4. **The Battle of Philadelphia**



The Battle of Bunker Hill

- **The Winter at Valley Forge** - In the winter of 1777/1778, George Washington brought his forces to a camp in **Valley Forge**. With the help of **General von Steuban**, Washington transformed the Continental Army into a force that could match the British.



Valley Forge

- In 1779, the **Spanish** and **French** joined the revolution on the side of the Americans.
- Both France and Spain were enemies of Britain. This help would be crucial to the American cause.

### **The Battle of Yorktown (1781)**

- The final battle of the war would be at Yorktown Virginia. With French help, American forces surrounded defeated British forces.
- 7000 British soldiers surrendered. The American Revolution was now over.

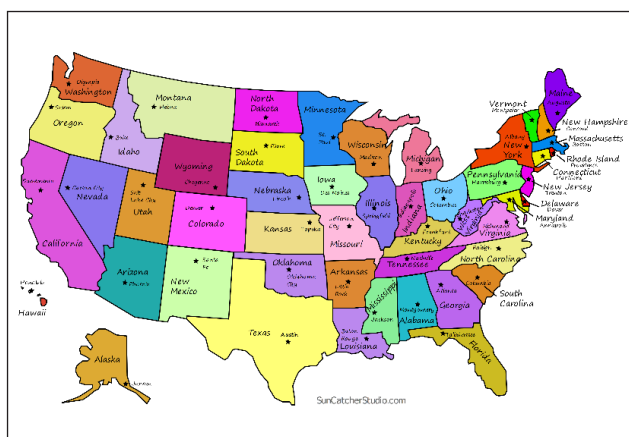


The British surrender at the Battle of Yorktown

## The results of the American Revolution

### 1. The growth of the United States of America

- The most significant result of the American Revolution was the creation of the United States of America.
- It grew from **13 to 50 states** over the next 200 years and reached the Pacific Ocean.
- This expansion saw **Native American peoples and their cultures all but wiped out.**



The USA today

### 2. The impact on France and Ireland

- In France, bankrupted by the war, the rule of Louis XVI was beginning to collapse. People looked to the American republic for inspiration. This paved the way for the French Revolution in 1789.
- The Revolution also inspired Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen to revolt against British rule in the 1798 rebellion.

### 3. The influence of ideals

- The Declaration of Independence stated that all 'all men are created equal'
- These words inspired minority groups such as women, slaves and Native Americans to campaign for equal rights.





**10.2 Exam focus – Try this for Homework**



*This is an engraving by Paul Revere, who fought against British rule in the American colonies during the American Revolution in the 1770's and 1780's. It shows his version of the event in Boston in 1770 at which British soldiers opened fire on a crowd and killed five people. Examine it and answer the questions below.*

**Q1. Who do you think are the victims in this picture?**

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**Q2. Explain your answer using evidence from the picture.**

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### 10.3 Homework Correction

**Q1. Name a plantation you studied as part of your junior cycle history course**

*The Ulster Plantation*

**Q2. Who ordered this plantation to take place?**

*King James I in 1609.*

**Q3. What changes occurred in Ireland as a result of the plantation which you studied?**

*Many new towns were built to the British plan, with 'diamonds' at the centre of the town. Many fortified houses known as 'bawns' were built across the countryside, mainly built by undertakers who were promised grants of land if they moved to Ulster. The Brehon law was replaced by the English Common Law. The Protestant religion was introduced and partly replaced Catholicism. Arable farming began to replace pastoral farming and wheat and flax were sown. The city of Derry was built and given to the trade guilds of London.*